

## **Editorial: Blurring Boundaries & Building Community through Critical Awareness, Collective Action, & Creative Pedagogies**

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What is the role of art education today; what should our preservice teachers know; what do we wish people outside of the field knew about us; how can we advocate for the importance of our work in the face of so much uncertainty in education broadly; how can our research speak to these questions; and how can we possibly tackle all of this with the amount of responsibilities we carry? Serving simultaneously as teachers, administrators, and researchers in our respective universities, we (Amanda and Cala) discuss these questions regularly. At times, it feels like too much, like we are navigating a cacophony of competing interests, tasks, and politics too accelerated to really be heard or to make a significant difference. But, together, we can be heard, and the articles in this issue provide an inspiring spectrum of approaches and examples of artists and educators engaged in active pedagogies for community connection and historical understanding on a local and global level.

Given that art education and art production shape our interaction with the world, including our communities and each other, a better understanding of how these ideas merge needs to be explored. It is this exploration around blurring boundaries and building community through critical awareness, collective action, and creative pedagogies that the articles in this issue of *JCRAE* address. The authors in this issue “explore the processes of production of difference in a world of culturally, socially, and economically interconnected and interdependent spaces” (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992, p. 14). We are living in a time that requires us to reflect on the cultural moment of political polarization, scrutiny of education, climate and food insecurity, cultural divisiveness and unity as well as a resurgence of silenced and marginalized histories.

Garoyan (1999) argued that, “Art is a place for exploration and creation. It serves as a liminal space, a neutral zone within which to engage a discourse between binaries, to entertain differing points of view, to

create new identities and myths about communities” (p. 137). This volume of *jCRAE* resides in this liminal, non-binary and vital space, amplifying a range of perspectives through material, linguistic, conceptual, and historical inquiry. We decided to split the issue into two sections: 1) History & Advocacy in Communities, Classrooms, and Cultural Spaces; and 2) Contemporary Activations & Creative Techniques for Collective Change & Awareness. This choice may seem counter to the argument for eliminating binaries, but it was actually in an effort to tighten the dialogue we saw emerging between authors.

The first group of articles address a range of questions supporting the need for advocacy and awareness in light of current and historical policies that have shaped cultural norms and created, often invisible, boundaries and inequities. The section opens with archival research on three educational programs in the Southeastern United States by **Christina Hanawalt, Lisa Novak, Emily Hogrefe-Ribeiro, and Ann Marie Satterfield**. *Black Education and Art as Activism in the Southeastern United States during the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements: Archival Research toward Racial Justice* illuminates historical community art programs that serve as inspiring examples for activism and racial justice through creative and collective educational efforts in our contemporary moment.

In a similar vein to the article by Hanawalt, Novak, Hogrefe-Ribeiro and Satterfield, in **Steve Willis & Allan Richard's** piece *Political Degradation of Human Rights and Art Education*, they argue that an education for all people about human rights can positively impact the education of children, and that the type of character leaders have can inform them of the importance of advancing human rights for all. Their review of history, current affairs and divisiveness in the United States brings them to advocate for a vigorous teaching of human rights in all classrooms.

Advocating for human rights is a prevalent theme throughout this issue, as **Shara Mills** takes readers on a journey through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) advocating for access for all beyond the legal policy, specifically in museums. By excluding the disabled community in museum spaces, we perpetuate the ableist mindset of society which widens the gap around community belonging. In *The Architectural Intersection of Museums and Disability Policy*, Mills pushes for an accepting space within museums that goes beyond the idea of inclusion and encourages a better understanding of the way that individuals interact in these spaces.

Building on questions of human rights, this issue illuminates the need for creating avenues to hear the perspectives of all members of a community, in an effort to develop mutual understanding and informed decision-making. In *Parental Influence on Child Art Learning: Examining Habitus and Social Trajectories in Taiwanese and U.S. Cultural Contexts*, **Meng-Jung Yang** provides readers with a qualitative study that examines how parental habitus in Taiwan and the United States shapes their views on the role of art in child development. Yang draws from social ecological systems frameworks and habitus theories using a cross-cultural approach. Findings reveal cultural, social, and educational factors that influence parental decisions around art, highlighting the importance of parent education and advocacy for integrating parental perspectives into art education policies.

Building on the theme of advocacy, representation, and shifting social perspectives, **Eunjin Kim** outlines a history of educational, cultural, and institutional exclusion of Asian American art and artists in *Omissions and Marginalization: Asian American Representation in Art History and Education*. The article introduces key tenets of Asian critical race theory, along with a valuable literature review of art education studies that illuminate ways to disrupt what has become the status quo by increasing representation and engaging students in counter-storying.

Together, the five articles in the first section of the issue traverse a spectrum of historical and contemporary conditions, highlighting critical questions about institutional policies and cultural practices. Through historical, ecological, and advocacy-oriented research, authors provide important ways to disrupt stereotypes, misperceptions, and omissions by introducing empowering approaches to support cultural inclusion through community engagement.

The second section of the issue builds on the social, historical, and policy-oriented research in the first by providing examples of contemporary art activations and creative techniques for collective change and awareness. In *Nourishing Connections: Fostering Collaboration on Food Ethics Through Art*, **Katja Juhola, Clarice Zdanski, Hugo Peña, Teea Kortetmäki and Raisa Foster** introduce the International Socially Engaged Art Symposium, where an interdisciplinary group of artists, academics, educators, youth, and policy-makers collectively explored food justice through creative, embodied, and dialogic action over a series of days. The performative and event-based nature of their investigation highlights the power of social action to affect the

perspectives and potential of shifting understandings that is difficult to capture in more academic forms of writing and public policy.

Similarly, embracing the performative and place-based potential of artistic intervention, **Albert Stabler's** visual narrative uses the ad hoc artifact of the barricade as a framework, taking readers through the practical, political, and artistic uses of found material by communities living in enclosures. Beginning with the street memorial, Stabler briefly describes a number of projects undertaken in his urban high school art classroom that were intended for public display and for which responded to current events. In *Visionary Barricades: Art Class as Memorial Factory*, one finds oneself encountering a plethora of ideas that revolve around barricades, found objects, street art, anarchism, and anti-form for which makes the invisible visible.

Further embracing the affective potential of contemporary art practices in K-12 classrooms, **Jody Stokes-Casey's** article, *Troubles and Sweets: Reflecting Critically on Historical Offerings for Contemporary Issues*, discusses the use of critical reflective practice in a preservice undergraduate class to address troubling anti-trans legislation in her home state. While centering contemporary art featuring a historically significant local hero, a drag queen by the name of Sweet Evening Breeze, Stokes-Casey reflects on power dynamics, focusing on joy, and the importance of partnerships in art teacher preparation.

Mirroring the themes of human rights and community building for mutual understanding in the first section, the articles in the second section provide lively examples of ways to use artistic approaches to address conflict by amplifying the voices of all members. In **Rebecca Shipe's** visual narrative, titled *Using Digital Literacy to Transform Conflict into Curiosity: Implications for Art Education*, she touches on ideas revolving around digital literacy, visual literacy, and conflict transformation. Shipe illustrates why digital literacy and the term conflict transformation are valuable concepts to address in the secondary level art classroom. She provides specific activities designed to enhance digital literacy while activating students' curiosities.

Continuing to highlight the power of building relationships and shared understanding in the art classroom, **Alexa R. Kulinski** traces a set of interconnected experiences that occurred over a number of years through the life of three objects that were given to her. In *The Stories Objects Carry*, Kulinski presents a beautiful set of visual narratives that illustrate layered stories, conceptualized through a new materialist lens

to explore the vitality of common objects, weaving together the lives of students, teachers, histories, communities, and the environments we share.

Together, the articles in this issue illuminate our unity, not just among our human communities, but also ways that stories, food, objects, material practices, policies, and language link us together, even in moments of strife and uncertainty. In a way, these articles circle us back to the beginning. They are a collective voice for which artists and educators can be heard and are being heard on a local and global scale. Thank you to all the authors for their deep thoughts, practices, and research. As a whole, we are making change.

## References

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